



NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Corporate Communications

nga.mil | 571-557-5400 | publicaffairs@nga.mil | FB: NatlGEOINTAgency | @NGA_GEOINT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 13, 2021

No. 2021-2

Contact

NGA Media Relations

Phone: (571) 557-5450

Email: MediaRelations@nga.mil

NGA launches neurodiversity pilot

SPRINGFIELD, Virginia. – The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency launched a pilot program in December to increase opportunities for neurodiverse individuals, including those on the autism spectrum.

The Neurodiverse Federal Workforce pilot program is a collaborative effort between NGA, MITRE, a not-for-profit R&D company, and Melwood, a D.C. nonprofit providing job opportunities to people with disabilities.

“NGA mission success is contingent on a world-class workforce with a wide diversity of opinions and expertise,” said NGA Deputy Director Dr. Stacey Dixon. “Neurodiverse talent can bring new perspectives to the NGA workforce and make important contributions to the mission.”

Following an intensive one-week training and interviews workshop, the six-month pilot program will place interns in geospatial and imagery analysis roles supporting NGA’s mission, said Dixon.

“This is a tremendous learning opportunity for NGA,” said Dixon. “It allows us to demonstrate that neurodiverse talent adds significant value to the geospatial-intelligence tradecraft and helps the agency better support its existing neurodiverse employees.”

The NFW pilot resulted from the Office of Management and Budget and General Service Administration’s Government Effectiveness Advanced Research Center Challenge, a competition to solicit proposals to solve the federal government’s toughest management problems while collaborating with the private sector, academia, and the public. MITRE’s neurodiversity proposal garnered a grand prize.

“This work will be an invaluable building block for creating meaningful change across the federal workforce,” said Teresa Thomas, program lead, neurodiverse talent enablement for MITRE. “NGA has stepped forward to lead by example, collaborating on an internship program that will benefit interns on the spectrum and NGA.”

According to the A.J. Drexel Autism Institute’s 2015 report “National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood,” young adults with autism had the lowest rate of employment compared to their peers with other types of disabilities.



NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Corporate Communications

nga.mil | 571-557-5400 | publicaffairs@nga.mil | FB: NatlGEOINTAgency | @NGA_GEOINT

“In addition to increasing career opportunities within the federal government for people on the autism spectrum, a historically underemployed population, the effort will also create a playbook to help other federal agencies recruit and support neurodiverse talent,” said Dixon.

#

About NGA

NGA delivers world-class geospatial intelligence that provides a decisive advantage to policymakers, warfighters, intelligence professionals and first responders.

NGA is a unique combination of intelligence agency and combat support agency. It is the world leader in timely, relevant, accurate and actionable geospatial intelligence. NGA enables the U.S. intelligence community and the Department of Defense to fulfill the president's national security priorities to protect the nation.

For more information about NGA, visit us online at www.nga.mil, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flipboard](#), [SoundCloud](#) or [YouTube](#).